



# News Release

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## **Marriage equality vote means marriage, divorce certificates must change**

*Public hearing Nov. 28 for comments on changes in gender-specific terms*

**OLYMPIA** — The Department of Health is seeking comments from the public on proposed changes in gender-specific terms for Washington's marriage and divorce certificates in response to the new same-sex marriage law that takes effect on December 6.

A public hearing will be held at 8 a.m., Wednesday, November 28, at [310 Israel Road SE, Rooms 152-153](#), in Tumwater. The department collects records of all people who marry or divorce in Washington, and issues copies of records to the public. Current forms use gender-specific terms, including bride, groom, husband, and wife. State health officials propose using gender-neutral terms on certificates. The proposal includes identifying the gender of couples on the certificate form, so the public will have information about the number of same-sex couples in Washington.

[Proposed changes to the rule](#) defining the content of Washington marriage and divorce certificates (WAC 246-491-149) are available on the agency's website. Written comments on the proposed rule change will be accepted until 5 p.m. on November 28, 2012. [Comments may be submitted online](#) or by writing to Washington State Department of Health, P.O. Box 47814, Olympia, WA 98504-7814.

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